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Agenda Item 4a

March 15, 2011

TO: MEMBERS OF THE BENEFITS AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

- I. SUBJECT:** Board Election Information
- II. PROGRAM:** Operations Support Services Division
- III. RECOMMENDATION:** Information Only
- IV. ANALYSIS:**

The 2010 Board Election for the State representative resulted in a voting rate of 10.9 percent. Although staff implemented several efforts to increase voter participation in this election, including supporting a candidate forum sponsored and moderated by an impartial third party and producing and posting online videos of each candidate, voter participation remained low. Following the election, the Board of Administration (Board) requested that staff look at additional options to increase voter participation.

The Operations Support Services Division (OSSD) contracted with a vendor to conduct a survey to determine why CalPERS members do not vote in the elections and what measures could be taken by CalPERS to encourage a higher voting turnout. The survey was sent to State, Public Agency, Schools and retired members. Forty-seven percent of the survey participants indicated that they did not vote because of insufficient information about the candidates. The members expressed that they would like to be informed about the candidates' financial disclosures, financial skills, investment experience and position statements on relevant issues. Survey respondents highly favored online candidate information and email reminders to vote.

Various steps have been taken throughout the years through statutory, regulatory, and administrative changes to improve the Board election process. The Board requested that OSSD research the feasibility and desirability of the following:

- Online voting
- Providing candidates with member contact information
- Modified plurality voting system
- Modifications to the nomination petition, ballot, and booklet

- Requiring ballot and petition signers to provide date of birth on the nomination petition as the identifier instead of a Social Security number
- Sending election ballots to employers versus member's home address
- Reducing the election schedule
- Providing more information on the candidates

A Formal Issue Memo (Attachment A) summarizes the research conducted for each of these options and the findings.

Staff recommends the following:

- Research and develop criteria for a modified plurality voting system
- Modify the format of the Nomination Petition form to simplify the completion of the form
- Modify the ballot and booklet envelope to promote the election

These changes require regulation changes and can be implemented for the 2013 Member-at-Large election.

V. STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item is not a specific part of the Strategic Plan, but is part of the regular and ongoing workload of the Operations Support Services Division.

VI. RESULTS/COSTS:

The cost will be further defined as part of the budget process.

KIM MALM, Chief
Operations Support Services Division

RUSSELL FONG
Interim Assistant Executive Officer
Administrative Services Branch

Attachment